

Application No.: 09/892,543
Amendment Dated: September 30, 2003
Reply to Office Action of: May 2, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, lines 9-20, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--The mixture solution taken out of the recovery column through a top portion thereof also includes the alcohol-based solvent contained in the copolymer solution along with unreacted vinyl acetate and the alcohol-based solvent blown into the column. This mixture solution is introduced into another treatment column, and vinyl acetate is separated from the mixture solution by extractive distillation with water. And, and it is taken out of the treatment column as a mixed solvent solution of alcohol and water. Furthermore, by separating and purifying this water/alcohol mixture solution, an alcohol-based solvent can be recovered. The unreacted vinyl acetate and the alcohol-based solvent thus recovered are reused in the copolymerization. The alcohol-based solvent recovered also is reused in the above-mentioned recovery of vinyl acetate.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 8, lines 19-26, with the following rewritten paragraph:

--First, 1 weight part of sodium hydroxide was added to 100 weight parts of the methanol solution. The copolymer was saponified while blowing a methanol vapor at 110 °C and at 343.4 kPa (3.5 kg/cm²). Methyl acetate formed as a by-product was distilled with a part of methanol, and expelled from the system. Further, a vapor of water/methanol was blown into the solution of the saponified product (EVOH) obtained to distil distill the solvent, and an EVOH solution (methanol/water = 65/35; weight ratio) having a polymer

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concentration of 35 wt % was obtained.--

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